

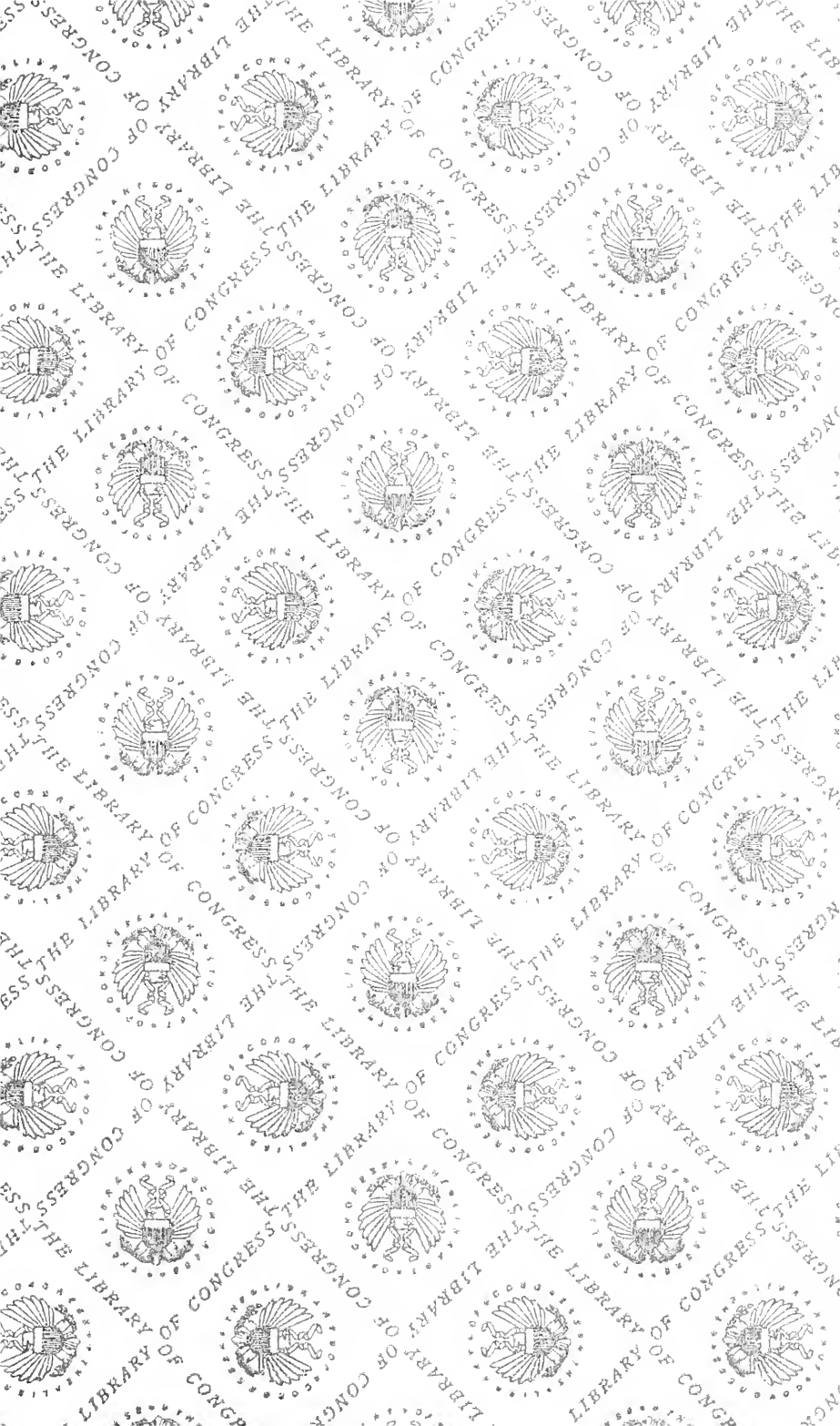
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# The Horner's Nest

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Sketch of Revolutionary War  
at Charlotte and the Vicinity

By MR. HERIOT CLARKSON



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# THE HORNET'S NEST.

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Mr. Gladstone has truthfully said: "Rely upon it, that the man who does not worthily estimate his own dead forefathers, will himself do very little to add credit or do honor to his country."

That truth applies with equal force to communities and nations. The chronicler should be exact, so that we can eschew that which is evil and do the thing that is good.

"All these things happened unto them for examples." People of every land who loved liberty and who believed that every man should serve his conscience made America their destination. Two great systems oppressed all Europe. Feudalism of State and Church.

Wickliffe about the middle of the fourteenth century translated the Bible into English—this was the beacon light in a dark age. "He opened the book of stone and the water flowed out." This was the beginning of the reformation which rapidly spread in England and elsewhere which was planted in England under Henry VIII and firmly rooted by Elizabeth. The defeat of the Spanish Armada forever fixed it in England. It was established through Martin Luther in Germany. The Reformed Church and State in England united, and the transition was easier, although not without courage and martyrdom.

The storm-center was in Scotland and France, homes of the Covenanters and the Huguenot. A little man—and feeble of body when he became the leader of freedom of conscience—was John Knox at the age of forty. He was of all Scotchmen most beloved by the Covenanters. For two years he served the French as a galley-slave for his convictions. "No free assembly," said he, "no free gospel." Mary Queen of Scots, the most beautiful woman of her day, with all of her wonderful charms and attractive ways, could not swerve him from his purpose. She asked him: "Think you that subjects, having power, may resist their princes?" Knox replied: "If their princes exceed the bounds, madam, and do against that for which they should be obeyed, it is no doubt but that they may be resisted." The divine right of kings and queens in the answer is de-

nied, and the divine right of conscience asserted. These ideas were engrafted in the creed of the Covenanters. In the trials that came to Scotland, thousands of sturdy, heroic men and women were compelled to leave their native land. They scattered through America. From the Scotch settlement in the North of Ireland they came—the Scotch-Irish. Some of them drifted to the Carolinas, and with the shrewd qualities of the Scotch, they settled in the fertile and beautiful Piedmont region of the Carolinas. The strongest settlement was in the county of Mecklenburg. One instance of persecution in Scotland is sufficient. In the cemetery at Stirling is a beautiful sculpture which is greatly admired. Two figures representing the "Virgin Martyrs" with an angel figure in the background all enclosed in glass. The story is partly told by Macaulay in his history of England.

On the 11th day of May 1685, during the persecuting reign of James II, Margaret MacLachlan and Agnes Wilson, the latter only eighteen years of age, were tied to stakes at low water in the Bay of Wigton and drowned by the rising of the Solway tide. The following inscription is on the marble with several emblematic designs:

## MARGARET.

"Virgin Martyr of the ocean wave with her like minded sister," Agnes.

"Love many waters cannot quench—God  
saves  
His chaste, impeared one in Covenant  
true  
O' Scotia's daughters! earnest scan the  
page  
And prize this flower of grace, blood  
bought for you."

We turn to France and Geneva—Calvin is the center figure. The general massacre of Protestants on St. Bartholomew's Day shocked all Europe—this was in 1572. France was drenched in blood, but the Protestants never yielded. After eight religious wars covering a period of about thirty years, King Henry, of Navarre on April 13th, 1598, signed the famous Edict of Nantes, by which the rights of the Protestants were established, and they were allowed freedom of religion. Louis XVI nearly a century after, on October

23rd, 1685, revoked it. The Protestants were fearfully persecuted. Their marriages were declared null—children deprived of inheritance—preachers indiscriminately put to death. France lost by this time more than one million of her most active, enterprising and industrious citizens. About two million continued to adhere to the Protestant religion. Can any nation point to such heroic adherence to principle? The fight has continued to the present time and has been recently revived by the law known as the "Law of Association Bill." These Huguenots, like the Covenanters, left home and native land, scattered throughout America, and large numbers settled in the Eastern part of the Carolinas. This was early in the eighteenth century, and they then and there planted the principles of civil liberty. About the same time and later the Scotch and Scotch-Irish (Scotch from Ulster in the North of Ireland) were settling Western Carolina along the Piedmont region. Alexander Craighead thundered from his pulpit at Sugar Creek Presbyterian church. This church is four miles north of Charlotte; the church has been rebuilt several times. He was well versed in the history of his church. "No free assembly, no free gospel," equal rights to the Protestants of all denominations. He believed in the rule of the people in church and State. From those fathers of freedom of conscience, Knox, Buchanan, Boston, Erskine and others, he no doubt drew inspiration. Craighead is buried in Sugar Creek church graveyard. In the cemetery (Elmwood) in Charlotte is a monument erected to his memory, and on it these words: "Advocate of American Independence from 1743" "Inspirer of the Mecklenburg Declaration." The Presbyterian Clergy one year after his death (1767) were for the first time in North Carolina allowed to perform the marriage ceremony. Who can tell if this was not through his influence? Nine years later we find that the May convention of 1775, held in Charlotte, is composed of members of Sugar Creek church (the parent church) and the other five Presbyterian churches in Mecklenburg county and one in Iredell, (then Rowan). The chairman of that convention was naturally elected from the congregation of Sugar Creek church, the parent church. He was Abraham Alexander, and is buried in old Sugar Creek church graveyard.

Of the persons chosen to meet in the May assembly, one was a Presbyterian minister named Hezekiah James Balch, and there were seven elders, and other members of the Presbyterian church—

in all twenty-seven. While the Covenanters were meeting in Piedmont Carolina the Huguenots and their allies were doing the same in Eastern Carolina, when the proposition went forth for a general convention of all the States to confer together for mutual protection against the unjust taxes imposed by Great Britain without representation, South Carolina was among the first to respond and appointed delegates. In defiance of the remonstrance and menaces of Lieutenant Governor Bull, a provincial Congress of delegates, chosen by the people, met in Charleston on the 11th of January 1775. It approved the proceedings of the General Congress. It went further; it selected a committee to see that the recommendations were complied with. On such a committee strong men were needed—men of courage—a revolution was at hand—no weaklings were wanted. Christopher Gadsden was made chairman—the Samuel Adams of South Carolina. The following are some of the gentlemen of Huguenot descent we find on the committee, names familiar in South Carolina: Isaac Huger, Maurice Simons, Thomas Legere, and others. All had but one end in view, the principles of the various phases of Protestantism—the Puritans, the Covenanters and the Huguenots—their opinions are so impressed upon the constitutions of every State in the Union and upon the constitution of the United States that we cannot but admit that in a large measure the whole superstructure of our laws are built upon religious freedom asserted by the Puritans, Covenanters and Huguenots. Freedom of conscience in matters of belief—freedom of action according to faith—freedom to choose teachers and rulers in church and State.

The laws of entail and primogeniture were struck down; feudalism in State swept away; every man allowed to worship God according to the dictate of his own conscience; feudalism of church wiped out. The time was ripe—who cares about the dates, May 20th or May 31st, or both? It was a citizenship that had come down from independent ancestry. The Stamp Act—exorbitant fees by public officials—the restrictions on the clergy other than those of the established church—the antipathy of some to the English government—the dislike to the government on account of the fact that the king had disallowed the charter to the Presbyterian college, (Queen Museum) situated in Charlotte, which had been granted by the North Carolina Legislature—taxation without representation. All these wrongs were keenly felt, and the people were restless and discontented. At the instance of Col. Thomas Polk (a great uncle of



President James K. Polk, who was born in Mecklenburg) the commander of the militia, two delegates from each company were called together at Charlotte as a representative committee. It is said that they were notified to meet on May 19th. The men selected were: the Reverend Hezekiah J. Balch, John McKnitt Alexander, Col. Thomas Polk, Hezekiah Alexander, John Philfer, Ephriam Brevard, Adam Alexander, James Harris, Charles Alexander, William Kennon, Zacheus Wilson, Sr., John Ford, Waightstill Avery, Richard Barry, Benjamin Patton, Henry Downs, Matthew McClure, Ezra Alexander, Neil Morrison, William Graham, Robert Irwin, John Query, John Flanniken, David Reese, Abraham Alexander, Richard Harris, Sr., John Davidson. These men met in the court house, which was then standing on what is now known as "Independent Square." The court house was packed to hear the proceedings. The wisest and best men had been selected. The meeting was organized by Abraham Alexander being called to the chair, and John McKnitt Alexander being selected as secretary. Fiery speeches were made. A speech was being made on the burdens that had been borne by the people. The unjust taxes that had to be paid, the restrictions put on the non-conformist, and the speaker expressed the belief that the only hope of redress was Independence. The test had come. An old man, one of the oldest in the convention, arose—"How can we declare ourselves free and independent?" said he. "Have we not sworn allegiance to King George?" A middle-aged man arose—he was cool and deliberate—he turned to the window and looked out—"See that beautiful oak yonder, with the leaves on it," said he, "suppose you swear to do a thing as long as those leaves are on the tree, and the leaves fall off, are you bound by your oath?" The court house shook with applause. The tide was turning. The King ought to be resisted as they were taught, if he "exceed his bounds and do against that for which he should be obeyed." Men were seen to gather at the large windows in the court house looking Southward, (now South Tryon street) a horseman is seen rapidly approaching. He passes Queen's Museum—"Liberty Hall"—the Faneuil Hall of North Carolina—he approaches the court house, he dismounts, several gather around him, he tells them hurriedly of the news brought to Charleston, that innocent blood had been spilt at Lexington. In that day the people of Mecklenburg were closely allied with Charleston, as it was the principle place where the people of Mecklenburg and

the upcountry traded. The young horseman was required to tell the convention of the news brought from Boston. The tale was told of how their Massachusetts brethren had been slain. The warm Southern hearts were moved at the wrongs. The oaths were forgotten. General Joseph Graham wrote some years after that the man who in the convention called attention to the oath, although a strong patriot, was for years after looked upon with suspicion. A committee was appointed to prepare resolutions declaring themselves free and independent. The convention is said to have met on May 19th and adjourned to May 20th. The following resolutions were adopted:

"1. That whosoever, directly or indirectly, abets, or in any way, form or manner, countenances the invasion of our rights, as attempted by the Parliament of Great Britain, is an enemy of his country, to America and the rights of men."

"Resolved 2. That we, the citizens of Mecklenburg county, do hereby, dissolve the political bands which have connected us with the mother country, and absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British crown, abjure all political connection with a nation that has wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties, and inhumanly shed the innocent blood of Americans at Lexington."

"Resolved 3. That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people, that we are and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing people under the power of God and the General Congress; to the maintenance of which independence, we solemnly pledge to each other, our mutual cooperation, our lives, our fortunes and our most sacred honor."

"Resolved 4. That we do hereby ordain and adopt as rules of conduct, all and each of our former laws, and the crown of Great Britain cannot be considered hereafter as holding any rights, privileges or immunities among us."

"Resolved 5. That all officers, both civil and military, in this county, be entitled to exercise the same powers and authorities as heretofore; that every member of this delegation shall henceforth be a civil officer and exercise the powers of a Justice of the Peace, issue process, hear and determine controversies according to law, preserve peace, union and harmony in the county, and use every exertion to spread the love of liberty and of country, until a more general and better organized system of government be established."

"Resolved 6. That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted by express to the President of the Continental Con-

gress, assembled in Philadelphia, to be laid before that body."

These resolutions were unanimously adopted and subscribed by the delegates. (A spurious copy of the original declaration a few years ago was gotten up in Charlotte with forged signatures on it, for the purpose of sale. The original was destroyed by fire.) Captain James Jack was engaged to deliver the resolutions to the president of Congress; and also the delegates in Congress from North Carolina. The resolutions were read aloud to the people in Charlotte and proclaimed amidst shouts and huzzas. Capt. Jack, on his way to Philadelphia, stopped over in Salisbury, and court being in session Mr. Kennon a lawyer, and one of the signers, read the resolutions aloud in open court to a large assemblage, and they were approved by all present except two lawyers, who afterwards were made to suffer severely for their disapproval. The Colonial Governor Martin writes this to the Secretary of State in England:

State Paper Office, London, America  
and West, I Vol. 204.

Bancroft's Collection, 1775, 153.  
Fort Johnston, North Carolina,  
30th June, 1775.

"The minutes of a council held at this place the other day, will make the impotence of government here as apparent to your Lordship as anything I can set before you, the Board having been afraid to take a becoming part, I firmly believe from apprehensions of personal injury and insult \* \* \*

The situation in which I find myself at present is indeed, my Lord, most despicable and mortifying. \* \* \* I live, alas! ingloriously, only to deplore it. \* \* \* The resolves of the committee of Mecklenburg, which your Lordship will find in the enclosed newspaper, surpass all the horrid and treasonable publications that the inflammatory spirit of the continent have yet produced: and your Lordship may depend, its authors and abettors will not escape, when my hands are sufficiently strengthened, to attempt the recovery of the lost authority of the government. A copy of these resolutions were sent off, I am informed by express to the Congress at Philadelphia, as soon as they were passed in the committee."

The fierce storm of war then began: but fortunately for the Carolinas two decisive battles gave them comparative quiet for several years. The battle of Moore's Creek in North Carolina fought Feb. 26th, 1776, and the battle of Fort Sullivan in South Carolina, fought June 28th, 1776. During these stormy times the women were not lacking in their devotion to the cause of liberty. A cold winter day in the early part of February

1776, the young ladies of Mecklenburg county gathered at "Liberty Hall" and took strenuous means to ensure the success of the patriots. The South Carolina and American General Gazette, published at the time the following concerning their proceedings:

"The young ladies of the best families of Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, have entered into a voluntary association that they will not receive the addresses of any young gentlemen of that place, except the brave volunteers who served in the expedition to South Carolina, and assisted in subduing the Scovallite (Tory) insurgents, the ladies being of opinion, that such persons as stay loitering at home, when the important calls of the country demand their military services abroad, must certainly be destitute of that nobleness of sentiment, that brave manly spirit that would qualify them to be the defenders and guardians of the fair sex. The ladies of the adjoining county, Rowan, have desired the plan of a similar association to be drawn up and prepared for signature."

Time rolls on—news is brought to the up country that Charleston has fallen. For nearly three months ill-fed, ill-clad and undisciplined militiamen under General Lincoln had baffled twelve thousand of the best disciplined troops of Great Britain. This was May 12th, 1780. An instance took place that saved Francis Marion from capture. He was staying at a house in Tradd street, and his host determined that all his guests should drink his wine freely, he locked the door to prevent their departure. Marion would not submit to this act of social tyranny and leaped from a second story window to the ground. His ankle was broken and he was taken to his home some distance from the city, and thus was spared to his country. Many persons from the Western part of the Carolinas were in the city and surrendered. Among them Dr. Ephriam Brevard, one of the signers, who was a surgeon in the continental army, and who broken by disease, when set at liberty, returned home to die in Mecklenburg. His grave is unknown. The Eastern part of South Carolina was absolutely in the power of the British. The interior must now be subdued. Sir Henry Clinton immediately after the surrender of Charleston sent Lord Cornwallis towards the frontier of North Carolina. Cornwallis heard that Colonel Buford with four hundred continentals, who had started to the relief of Charleston, had left Camden and was retreating leisurely towards Charlotte. He sent a detachment under Tarleton of nearly twice Buford's in number to overtake him. Tarleton marched in

fifty-four hours one hundred and five miles and came upon Buford on the Waxhaw by surprise. Buford sent a flag of truce, and it is related that while negotiations were pending and flags of conference were passing, Tarleton's cavalry fell upon the unsuspecting continentals and gave them no quarter. This terrible cruelty spread consternation over that region, women and children took refuge in more distant settlements. The widowed mother of President Andrew Jackson left her home with her two sons, Robert and Andrew, and took refuge in Mecklenburg. They stayed with the widow of Rev. J. M. Wilson and widow Alexander, (mother of Susannah Alexander,) near Charlotte. This cruel treatment made an abiding impression on young Jackson who was then only thirteen years old. Who can tell if his early recollection did not in after life give him nerve and courage to endure and to conquer at New Orleans the foe of his youth? He and his brother Robert immediately entered the army under General Sumter. They were both made prisoners. The indomitable courage in the after man appeared in the boy, when ordered to clean the muddy boots of an English officer, he refused and received for this a sword-cut. His mother and two of her sons perished during the revolution. His mother died just after leaving Charleston, where she had been to visit friends and relatives who were there in prison. He alone of the family survived. The blood of Buford's men stirred the hearts of the patriots in Western Carolina. General Rutherford raised fifteen hundred men whom he brought together at Charlotte, this force was sufficient to discourage Tarleton. On June 22d the Loyalist under a Colonel Moore were defeated at Ramseur's Mill by Colonel Locke, who had a detachment of Rutherford's force. General Sumter at this critical period, with a force of North and South Carolinians, returned to his State, and on July 12th defeated Colonel Furgerson and Capt. Houck at Williamson's plantation in the Western part of the State. His success brought many recruits to him and he was again successful at Hanging Rock. Many partisan bands now hurried to join Gates who had taken charge of the Southern army and was moving towards Camden where he was sent to meet Lord Rawdon and Lord Cornwallis; but alas! it was a fearful meeting for the continentals. Gates was defeated, the brave DeKalb was left with eleven wounds on him and soon died. General Rutherford was compelled to surrender. This was August 16th. General Gates hastened to Charlotte and reached there—eighty miles away, the

same day of the battle. On his way he was informed of Sumter's splendid victory taking Fort Carey on the Wateree. When Sumter heard of Gates' defeat he commenced retreating up the South side of the Wateree river. He was pursued by Tarleton with his wonderful celerity, who overtook and surprised Sumter at Fishing Creek. It is said that General Sumter escaped in his night clothes. Sumter came to Charlotte a day or two afterwards. He never forgave Tarleton for having caught him napping, and Nov. 20th following engaged him in battle at Black Stock Hill with such severe results that one-third of Tarleton's privates engaged were killed. Sumter was fortunate in having the mountain country of the Carolinas to draw upon for assistance. In his command were such men as Colonel William Hill, ancestor of General D. H. Hill. It now looked like the Carolinas were subdued. Lord Cornwallis commenced his march toward Charlotte to establish his headquarters. Behind him he left the unyielding Huguenots, in front were the determined Scotch-Irish Covenanters. Both were equal to the emergency. Johnson in his *Traditions and Reminiscences of the Revolution*, says:

"Among the most efficient of Marion's men were his neighbors and friends of Huguenot descent, the Horry's, Simons, Ravenels, Cordes, Dubos, etc." The writer gives two incidents to show the desperate courage of these men—on Aug. 18th, 1780, Col. H. Horry, with 16 militia releases 150 prisoners, guarded by 32 British soldiers. On Nov. 20th 1780, Col. James Simons of Washington's troop, with 36 men, routs Col. Cunningham with 150 British militia. We think of Cromwell at Dunbar. "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered." Nelson at Trafalgar displaying the signal—"England expects every man to do his duty." Wellington at Waterloo as he shouted to his troops: "Boys, can retreat be thought of? Think of old England." Napoleon at the battle of the Pyramids—"forty centuries look down upon you." To inspire the youth of our land, let us remember Washington at Valley Forge and Marion at Snow Island. Hope had died in the hearts of almost every Southern patriot. Marion kindled once more the spark. Who has not heard of the instance? the captured English officer taken to Snow Island in the swamps, the rendezvous of Marion and his men, Marion inviting him to dine with him, and handing the officer cold water and sweet potatoes for dinner. He asked Marion if that was what he and his men lived on. Marion told him it was. The Englishman said: "I can no longer fight against such brave men and patriots." When he was ex-

changed he returned to England, never more to fight against the Americans. Adversity shows the character of a people. Many of the rich and cowardly sought protection from Cornwallis to save their property from confiscation and for other sinister motives, but those who loved freedom and served their conscience sprung by leaps and bounds to the front. No sooner had Cornwallis started towards Charlotte, thinking all behind was safe, than Marion and his men made the patriots' hearts glad with their marvelous exploits. Colonel Henry Lee, (father of the Confederate chieftain) who served with Marion, says of him:—"small in statue, hard in visage, healthy, abstemious and taciturn, enthusiastically wedded to the cause of liberty, he deeply deplored the condition of his beloved country. The common weal was his sole object; nothing selfish, nothing mercenary soiled his ermine character. Fertile in stratagem, he struck unperceived; and, retiring to those hidden retreats selected by himself in the morasses of the Pee Dee and Black rivers, he placed his corps not only out of the reach of his foe, but often out of the discovery of his friends. A rigid disciplinarian, he reduced to practice the justice of his heart; and during the difficult course of warfare through which he passed, calumny itself never charged him with violating the rights of persons, property or humanity, never avoiding danger, he never rashly sought it; and acting for all around him as he did for himself, he risked the lives of his troops only when it was necessary. Neither elated with prosperity, nor depressed by adversity, he preserved an equanimity which won the admiration of friends and exacted the respect of his enemies." Can higher tribute be paid to any man? Such was the hero who with McDowell, Morgan, Davidson, Lee, Sumter, Pickens and others did so much to redeem the South. We here take leave of these patriots' examples and commend them to the youth of all ages.

The battle of Camden was fought August 16th, 1780. Major William Richardson Davie's corps had suffered severely with Sumter at Hanging Rock, South Carolina, and he had been escorting to Charlotte the wounded to the hospital which he had previously established. After performing this service Davie hastened to the general rendezvous of General Gates, Rugely's Mill. He arrived on the 15th, after Gates had moved, and after marching all night, met our flying troops. General Huger informed him of the fate of the Americans. Major Davie at once did all in his power to relieve the situation. He had served with Sumter, and, as has been

mentioned, Sumter was defeated at Fishing Creek by Tarleton a few days after the battle of Camden, so the burdens of defending this section were shifted to Davie. Bravely did he bear them. In 1780, he had obtained license to practice law, but seeing the need of his country, he again took up arms. He was now twenty-four years old. He had been wounded near Charleston the year before. The State being too poor he sold the little property he had and raised the funds to equip the troops under him. Such was the man who now returned to defend Charlotte. He had been a student at "Queen's Museum." He had heard the eloquent words of Dr. Alexander McWhorter, the President of Queen's Museum on June 3rd, when he had addressed the troops under General Rutherford. (One of Dr. McWhorter's sisters, Jane, married John Brevard, and another, Agnes, married Alexander Osborne.) Davie determined that Charlotte should not be taken without resistance. This was September 5th. He had been recently made colonel. Cornwallis was slowly approaching. Davie went forward with his small force to harass his foraging parties. He was accompanied by Maj. George Davidson. They took post at Providence, on the Charlotte road. On the evening of September the 20th they decamped and determined to strike a blow at the Loyalist encamped at the plantation of Captain James Wahab (whose name was later changed to Walkup) in the Southwestern part of Union county, then Mecklenburg. Many of his troops were from that section. Early next morning they gained unperceived the camp of the Loyalist. The house and yard were almost surrounded by a splendid cornfield. He detached Major Davidson through the cornfield and he himself took the lane leading to the house. The enemy were completely surprised and fled, sixty were killed and wounded, ninety-six horses were taken, and one hundred and twenty stands of arms. The British drums in contiguous quarters then beat to arms. Captain Wahab, the owner of the farm, spent a few minutes halt in rapt converse with his wife and children, who ran out as soon as the firing ceased, to embrace their protector. Bitter followed those sweet moments. The British troops, reaching the house, the commander yielded to diabolical fury and ordered it burnt. Wahab saw his home that sheltered his wife and little children, wrapped in flames, and he unable to relieve them. Davie made good his retreat and returned to Providence, having marched sixty miles in twenty-four hours. Generals Sumter and Davidson arrived the evening of his return. They had about one thousand

men and Davie less than two hundred. Four days after the affair at Wahab's, Cornwallis put his army in motion, taking the Steel Creek road to Charlotte. This being announced to General Sumter he retired, leaving Colonel Davie who was strengthened by Major Joseph Graham. Major Graham, like Colonel Davie, had been a student at "Queen's Museum." He had been in Charlotte when the Declaration of Independence on May 20th, 1775, was formerly and publicly made. He was deeply impressed with the importance of the struggle, and no man acted a braver part.

At midnight, September 25th, 1780, this little band of heroes reached Charlotte. Next day the battle of Charlotte took place. I give the account as narrated by Colonel Davie: "Charlotte, situated on a rising ground, contains about twenty houses, built on two streets which cross each other at right angles, at the intersection of which stands the court house (Independence Square.) The left of the town, as the enemy advanced, was an open common on the woods which reached up to the gardens of the village. With this small force, viz: one hundred and fifty cavalry and mounted infantry and fourteen volunteers under Major Graham, Davie determined to give his Lordship a foretaste of what he might expect in North Carolina. For the purpose he dismounted one company, and posted it under the court house, where the men were covered breast-high by a stone wall. Two other companies were advanced about eighty yards, and posted behind some houses and in gardens on each side of the street. While this disposition was making, the Legion (Tarleton's) was forming at the distance of three hundred yards, with a front to fill the South Tryon street, and the light infantry on their flanks. On sounding the charge, the cavalry advanced at full gallop within sixty yards of the court house, where they received the American fire, and retreated with great precipitation. As the infantry continued to advance, notwithstanding the fire of our advanced companies, who were too few to keep them in check, it became necessary to withdraw them from the cross street, and form them in line with the troops under the court house. The flanks were still engaged with the infantry, but the center was directed to reserve their fire for the cavalry, who rallied on their former ground and returned to the charge.

They were again well received by the militia, and galloped off in great confusion, in the presence of the whole British army. As the British infantry were now beginning to turn Colonel

Davie's right flank, these companies were drawn off in good order, successively covering each other, and formed at the end of the street about one hundred yards from the court house, under a galling fire from the British light infantry, who had advanced under the cover of the houses and gardens. The British cavalry again appeared, charging by the court house, but upon receiving a fire, which had been reserved for them, they again scampered off. Lord Cornwallis in his vexation at the repeated miscarriage of his cavalry openly abused their cowardice. The Legion, reinforced by the infantry pressed forward on our flanks, and the ground was no longer tenable by this handful of brave men. A retreat was then ordered on the Salisbury road, and the enemy followed, with great caution and respect, for some miles, when they ventured to charge the rear guards. The guards were of course put to flight, but on receiving the fire of a single company, they retreated. Our loss consisted of Lieutenant Locke, and four privates killed, and Major Graham and five privates wounded. The British stated their loss at twelve non-commissioned officers and privates killed, and Major Hanger, Captains Campbell and McDonald, and thirty privates wounded. In the engagement Major Graham received nine wounds, six with the sabre and three with lead. He was mercifully spared to his country. This brave youth, only twenty-one years of age, as soon as he recovered from his wounds returned to the army. Cornwallis' stay in Mecklenburg was a stormy one. He had a large army which had to be fed. The Mecklenburg men were determined. Colonel Polk had a mill (old Bissell mill) about two miles Southwest of Charlotte, the British pickets were attacked there. On October 5th a foraging party of about four hundred under Major Doyle went towards the fertile region of Long Creek. While plundering McIntyre's farm, about seven miles North of Charlotte, twelve men under Captain James Thompson attacked and actually drove the British raiders from the farm. The British loss was so severe that the survivors upon reaching Charlotte declared "every bush along the road concealed a rebel." Lieutenant George Graham was one of this brave party. He was a brother of Joseph Graham, and was a strong, courageous man. He is buried in the old Presbyterian cemetery in Charlotte. He was active during Lord Cornwallis' stay in Charlotte attacking his foraging parties. On October 7th Major Ferguson was defeated at Kings's Mountain and slain. He was one of Cornwallis' most trusted officers. Upon Cornwallis hear-

ing of the defeat Charlotte was immediately evacuated. This was on the evening of October 14th. We read in Tarleton's campaigns this about Mecklenburg:

"It was evident and it has been frequently mentioned to the King's officers, that the counties of Mecklenburg and Rowan were more hostile than any others in America." We read this about Charlotte:

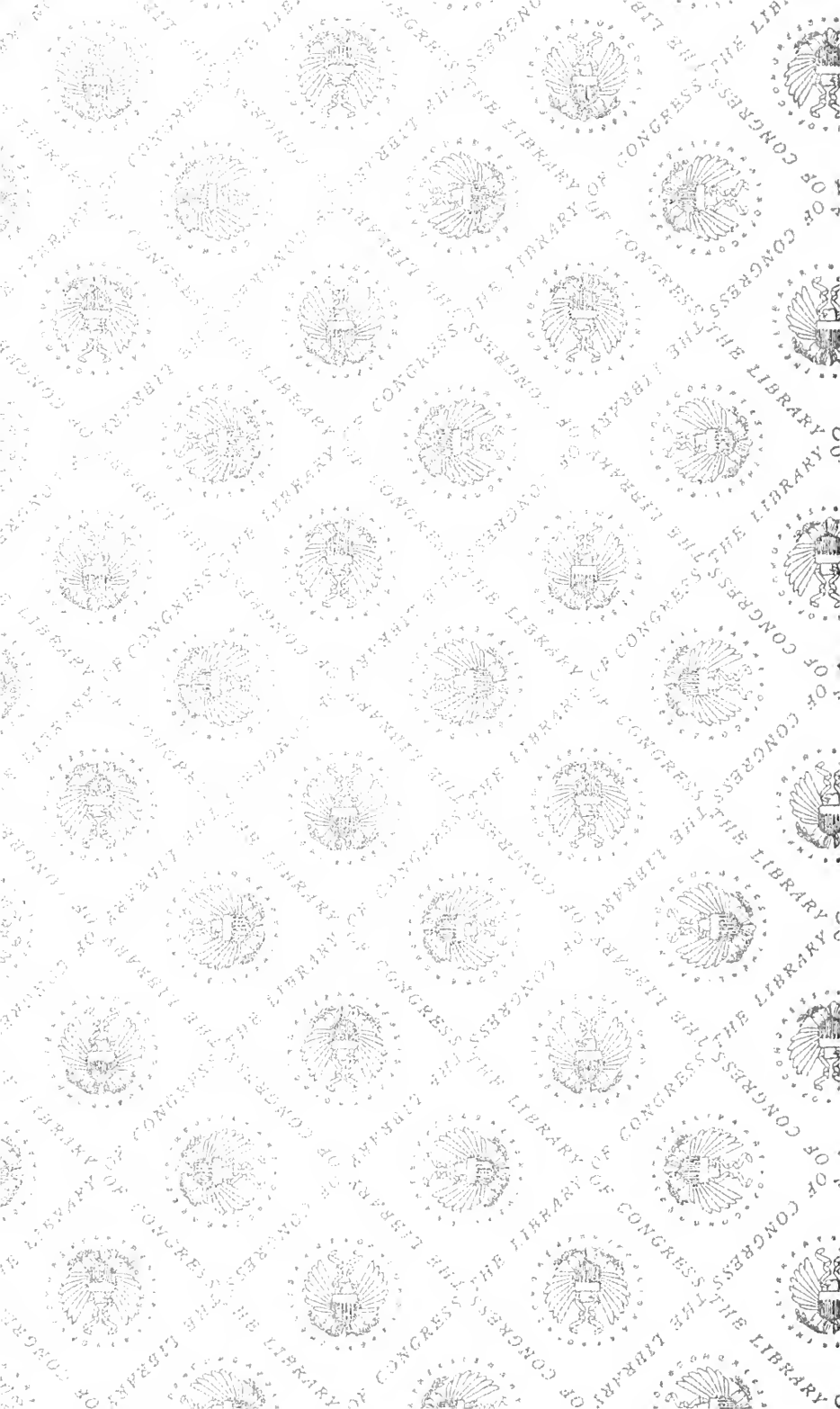
"The town and environs abounded with inveterate enemies," when later the suggestion was made to go by Charlotte, he says: "The route by Charlotte town through the most hostile quarter of the province on many accounts not advisable." Cornwallis later on his way North did not go by Charlotte, but went North of Charlotte and crossed at Cowan's Ford. In a letter to Colonel Balfour, of the British army, Cornwallis says: "Charlotte is an agreeable village, but in a d—d rebellious country." When Cornwallis retired from Charlotte, he halted upon Robert Wilson's plantation, and himself and staff quartered at the house of the patriot. The Wilsons were all staunch Scotch-Irish, and sturdy Republicans. The wife of Robert Wilson, (a brother of Zacheus, a signer) had "seven sons in the rebel army," and also her husband. Mrs. Wil-

son was very courteous, and Cornwallis endeavored to win her to the Royal cause by flattering words. Her reply deserves to be inscribed upon brass and marble: "I have seven sons who are now, or have been, bearing arms; indeed, my seventh son, Zacheus, who is only fifteen years old, I yesterday assisted to get ready to go and join his brothers in Sumter's army. Now, sooner than see one of my family turn back from the glorious enterprise, I would take those boys, (pointing to three or four small sons) and with them would myself enlist under Sumter's standard and show my husband and sons how to fight; and if necessary, how to die for their country." Ah, General, said the cruel Tarleton, "I think you've got into a Hornet's Nest." Cornwallis' reply was: "Never mind, when we get to Camden, I'll take good care that old Robin Wilson never gets back again."

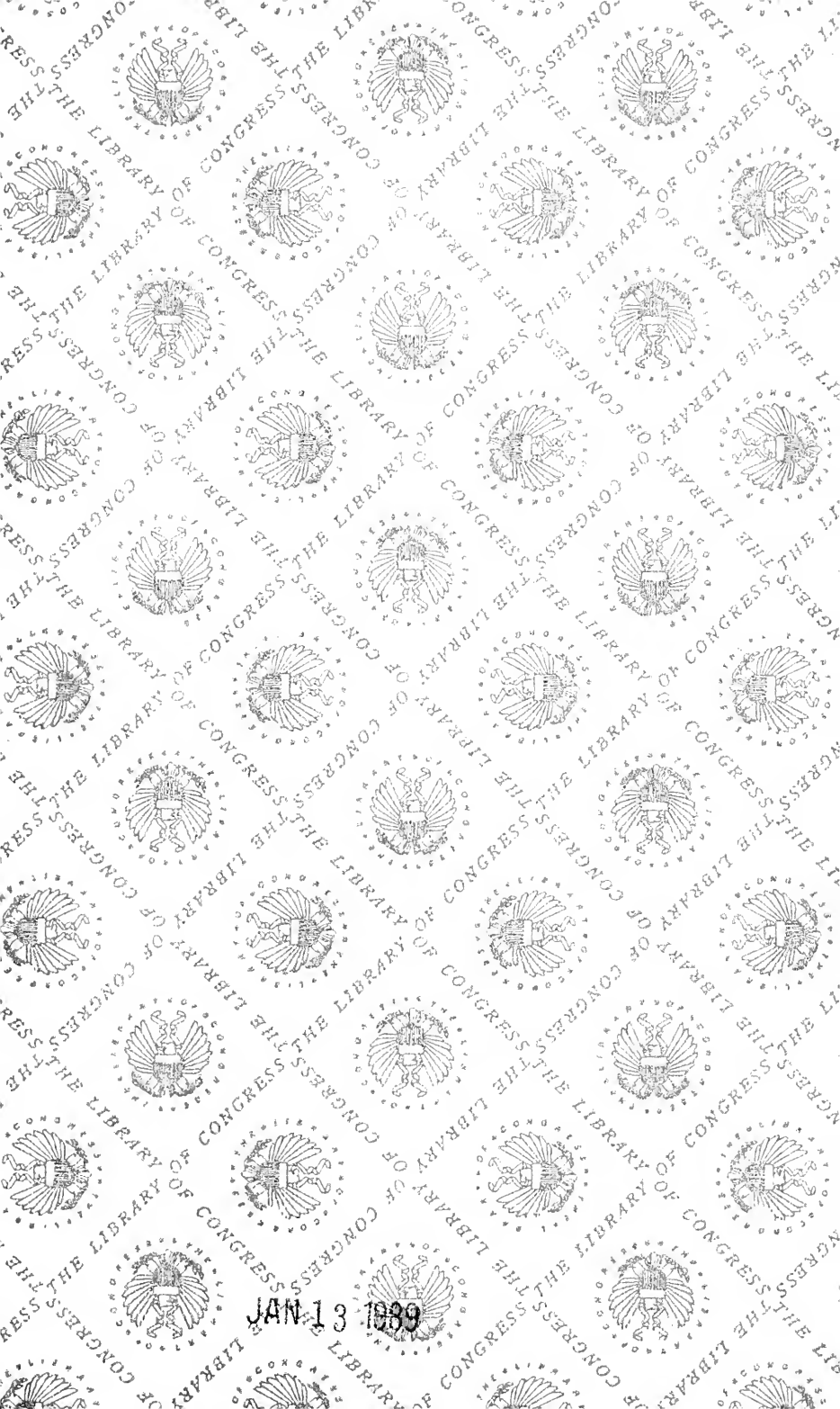
On the spot where Queen's Museum once stood is the county court house. In front is a handsome monument erected to the signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. On one side are the names of the signers. On the other side facing South Tryon street is a Hornet's Nest, and on it are these words: "Let us alone."











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